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ABSTRACT

The guide provides a brief introduction to the culture and language of Italy, and is designed for visitors, students, and business travelers. It offers practical information on various aspects of daily living, including: money; food; restaurants; hotels; postal and telecommunications services; transportation; shopping; health and medical care: safety and security; tipping; measurement and clothing size conversions; greetings; titles and forms of address; family interaction; time; personal space and privacy; walking; meals; personal appearance; dating; male dominance; leisure activities; family life; hospitality; and festivals. Suggestions for appropriate behavior and expectations are offered. It also includes basic information about Italy: a historical sketch; a map; facts about geography and people; government; economy; education; religion; and art. A brief bibliography lists additional books about Italy. (MSE)

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INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE SERIES

LIVING IN ITALY

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ORIENTATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT STAFF
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS DIVISION

Project Director & Editor	Alvino E. Fantini, Ph.D.
Project & Orientation Director	Julie Soquet, M.I.A.
Writer	Annie Hawkinson, C.Phil.
Production Assistant	Joy Waliens
Cover Illustration	A. Mario Fantini

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COUNTRY SUPPLEMENT: Living in Italy

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FIRST STEPS

Congratulations! You are about to embark upon an adventure--living in another country. Your destination is Italy. When you arrive, you will need to be able to satisfy some immediate survival needs. Often you will find that you must do things differently from how you do them at home. This section is designed to help you get started learning how to live in Italy. Although every town will be a little different, we can provide you with basic facts about life in Italy. Filling in the details will be up to you. So, while we can tell you, for instance, about restaurants and eating habits in Italy, you will need to find places to eat which have food that you like and can afford. And while we can tell you about different means of transportation existing in Italy, you will still need to find the best way to get around the town where you live. We can suggest alternatives, but you will be making the final choices.

One final note: You may find that cultural changes, technological advances and regional differences affect customs, values, systems and even the "country facts" as reported in this booklet. So "expect the unexpected" and be prepared to learn as well from your own direct experience. The information in this section and those which follow should be used only as an initial guide. **Buona fortuna!**

This section covers the topics listed below. Read the ones of most interest to you now, then read the others as the need arises.

1. Money
2. Food
3. Restaurants
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5. Telephone
6. Transportation
7. Letters and Telegrams
8. Shopping
9. Health and Medical Care
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11. Tipping
12. Conversions

1. MONEY

Lira (plural: **lire**) is the name for the monetary unit used in Italy. Its value changes according to the world money market, but it is important to know that one **lira** is worth a very small amount of money. This means that you need to think in terms of thousands of lire when you go out to buy something. Check the current exchange rate before you leave for Italy so you can get used to thinking about different sums for spending than you might be used to at home.

Italian **lire** come in the following denominations: 5, 10 and 50 (which are becoming less frequent), as well as 100, 200 and 500 **lire** coins; and 500, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 50,000 and 100,000 **lire** banknotes.

Banks are open in Italy Monday through Friday from 8:20 a.m. to 1:20 p.m. In addition, you can also change money at an official money exchange office or **cambio**. They offer better exchange rates than banks, so you will get more **lire** for your currency if you go to a **cambio**. It is also possible to exchange money at airports and train stations, but their rates are not as good as at a bank or **cambio**. It is legal to exchange money anywhere in Italy when you make a purchase. If you find yourself short of cash, a good rule of thumb is to exchange only

small amounts at airports, train stations, hotels, restaurants or shops, and to change larger sums at a bank or **cambio.**

When you go to Italy you may take an unlimited sum of money if it is in traveler's checks. If you carry **lire**, you cannot take more than a certain amount. Check what that amount is before you go, because you will not be allowed to leave Italy with any more than that sum either. When you arrive in Italy, you will be required to provide an official record of all the currency and traveler's checks you bring with you. When you leave you will not be allowed to take out any more money than you came in with.

2. FOOD

A typical meal in Italy consists of **antipasto**, **pasta**, meat, vegetables, salad, cheese and fruit. Italians usually drink wine and mineral water with their meals.

Antipasto is an assortment of greens and cold vegetables (peppers, radishes, fennel), fish (tuna, sardines, shrimp, etc.), and/or meat (ham, salami) that is often served to begin a meal. An **antipasto** may consist of two items or several. Soup is also common and is usually served after the **antipasto.**

Pasta is the staple of the Italian diet. Literally translated, it means "dough." **Spaghetti**, **maccheroni**, **vermicelli**, **ravioli**, **tortellini**, **fettuccini**, **linguini**, and **cannelloni** are all types of **pasta**, and there are many more varieties to be found. It is cooked **al dente**, neither undercooked nor overcooked, with a slightly chewy consistency. **Pasta** is served with different sauces, and various regions of the country have different pasta specialties, such as **lasagne al pesto**

eaten in Genoa, **fettuccini al burro** served in Rome, **tortellini** in Bologna, **ravioli** in Florence, and **spaghetti alla carbonara** in Sicily. Be sure to try the pasta dishes particular to the region of Italy where you are staying.

Italians eat veal, chicken, lamb, pork, and little birds, often served with vegetables and herbs in a meat sauce or as a pasta filling. There is plenty of fish in Italy, and many varieties are eaten, including octopus, swordfish, mussels, and crab.

Common vegetables are spinach, broccoli, eggplant, asparagus, squash, fennel and artichokes. They are often sautéed in oil with plenty of garlic. Salads typically consist of lettuce with an oil and vinegar dressing.

Cheese is the customary dessert for Italians, and there are many varieties. As with **pasta**, certain cheeses are more commonly eaten in certain regions, so it is fun to find out what the local cheeses are for your region and sample them.

Fruits which are common include oranges, tangerines, apples, pears, grapes, peaches and apricots. Also you can get baskets of raisins, figs, dates, and nuts.

Sweet desserts are not common in Italy; fruit and cheese are usually served at the end of the meal. You can always find **gelato** (ice cream), however, and Italian chocolates and fruit pastes are quite delicious.

3. RESTAURANTS

There are different kinds of Italian restaurants, and their prices vary according to type. First there is a **ristorante**, which is a first-class eating establish-

ment and usually more expensive than the smaller **trattoria** or **osteria**. Many are smaller family operations with **Mamma** in the kitchen, **Papa** acting as host, and a few relatives serving as waiters/waitresses. You will always get a large portion of tasty food because here the same food is served to the family, the waiters, and steady customers, and everyone expects it to be good. A **rosticceria** is a combination delicatessen and stand-up snack bar where you can find delicious hot and cold dishes.

There are a few important things you should know about Italian restaurants. First of all, you usually pay a cover charge for which you also get bread and a napkin. Italian menus list all the prices of the items served except when you find the letters **s.g.** or **s.q.** These stand for **secondo grandezza** (according to size) and **secondo quantità** (according to quantity), and you should expect an arbitrary price. You can always ask before you order something with **s.g.** or **s.q.** following it.

Few restaurants have a fixed menu. The real Italian meal is almost always **à la carte**. **À la carte** does not mean that the meal is more expensive; it means only that you must choose each item you want to eat.

Butter is not usually served in Italian restaurants. Although it may be mixed in the **pasta**, it is not eaten with bread. Water is also not typically served, rather it is common to order mineral water at a small extra charge. Although coffee is usually not served in restaurants, if you would like to have some, a special waiter or waitress will bring it from a nearby bar. It will not cost anymore in the restaurant than if you went to the bar yourself to buy it.

Tips are included in the bill in Italian restaurants, but it is common to give an additional tip to your waiter or waitress.

If you would like to read about meal customs, read item 8 in the CUSTOMS AND VALUES section of this supplement.

4. HOTELS

Italian hotels are classified by law into fixed categories: luxury, first, second, third, fourth and certain **locande** ("inns") which are not usually used by tourists. **Pensioni** (boarding houses) are also classified into the same categories but are considered one class lower than hotels all along the line. For instance, a first-class **pensione** is taxed by the government at the same rate as a second-class hotel. There should be a rate card on the back of all hotel entry or closet doors, but it is also important to ask about supplementary charges, which sometimes can be quite expensive. Usually there is a fixed service charge of 15%, plus taxes on food and drink as well as on amenities such as air conditioning. If tax is not included in the room rate, you will want to increase the basic room rate by one third in order to determine what you are most likely to have to pay.

Pensioni are comfortable and less expensive than hotels. They have more of a family atmosphere and their prices include all your meals. Guests are usually expected to stay at least three days, but in many it is possible to negotiate for a two-day stay. If you are only in town for one night, then you may have to stay at a hotel.

Some things you may find useful to know about Italian hotels are described here: Unless you have a private bathroom in your hotel room, a bath is usually paid for separately in an Italian hotel. No soap is supplied, except in deluxe hotels, and toilet paper is often coarse. Coat hangers are uncommon. There is no heating in old hotels, and problems

with electricity and plumbing are also common in older buildings. Breakfast is light, since Italians often have only a cup of coffee with bread and butter.

One other type of hotel which may be of interest to you is the **albergo diurno** ("day hotel"). Usually located underground in central squares and arcades in many Italian cities, they are useful and clean. Most advertise extensive services: baths of every type, dressing and toilet rooms, hairdressers, luggage check rooms, public telephones, writing rooms, clothing pressed while you wait, umbrella rentals, money exchange offices, tickets of all types, tourist services and guides, and open timetables. Remember to look for one of these when you are traveling through a strange town and need such services.

5. TELEPHONE

Pay phones in Italy are a bit complicated to use. First you must buy a **gettone** (token) from the nearest cashier. Place it in the slot at the top of the phone with the single groove facing towards you. When you lift the receiver you should hear a dial tone immediately. Dial your number. The token will drop down into the phone box, and you and the person you are calling will be able to talk to one another. Until the coin is dropped into the box, you will not be able to hear one another. Newer telephones are simpler to use but still require tokens. They can be used for **teleselezione** (long-distance calling). NOTE that hotels often add several hundred percent to international calls made, so it is important to check before you make such a call in a hotel. It will be much cheaper from a public phone.

You can make phone calls from bars and other public places which display a special telephone sign outside. All Italian cities can be called directly, as

with most European countries. To call countries outside of Europe, you need to dial 170 (Italcable Intercontinental Operator) and tell them the place and number you want to reach.

6. TRANSPORTATION

Train travel in Italy is good. Most Italian trains have both first- and second-class carriages. Some of the most rapid ones, however, are only first class, while some of the local, suburban and shopping trains are only second class. There are different kinds of trains: **rapido**, which are the fastest and charge a supplemental fee depending upon the distance and class you are traveling; **espresso**, fast long-distance express trains; **diretto**, medium-fast trains with more stops than an express; and **locale**, which are the slowest since they make all stops along the route being traveled.

Most long-distance, overnight trains have first- and second-class sleeping cars and second-class couchettes. Seat reservations can be made on many long-distance trips and on all international trains. When traveling second class without a reservation, it is important to get to the station early, especially on weekends and holidays, if you want to get a seat. First class is less crowded, so you may not need to go as early to get a seat.

Bus transportation throughout Italy is also very good. Buses go between cities on regular schedules, usually with single-day service, leaving in the morning and arriving in the evening. Long-distance buses do not travel at night. Most local transportation is also by bus, except in the larger cities like Rome and Milan, where there are subway systems called **metropolitana**.

Gondola and other floating craft are used for local transportation in Venice.

Taxis (**tassì**) are usually painted black, green or yellow in Italy, and are generally not allowed to cruise. They must line up at taxi stands or answer telephone calls relayed to them by radio dispatchers. They usually respond quickly.

7. LETTERS AND TELEGRAMS

Post offices in Italy are open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. every day except Sunday. You can also buy stamps at tobacconists' shops, which are marked with a big T sign outside. Rates change periodically, so it is important to check the current rates as soon as you arrive. If there is a strike in the postal system, you can send international letters through the Vatican City post office.

Italian post offices provide a variety of services: typewriters for writing telegrams; a stationery shop selling paper by the sheet and single envelopes, cards, and stamps; a package-wrapping service.

Telegrams can be sent from any post office as well as from **telegrafi** offices. **Telegrafi** are open all night.

8. SHOPPING

The first thing to remember about shopping in Italy is that most shops close for about three hours at midday. The closing period is generally from about 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. When stores reopen, they usually stay open until around 7 p.m.

Italy is known for good style and craftsmanship. What is important to recognize is that each region has its specialties, and the best buys are found in the region where a particular type of item is made. A few examples are Venice for glassware, lace, and

velvet; Naples for coral, cameos, and tortoise-shell articles; Vietri for ceramics; Florence for leather goods, straw and raffia products, and embroidery; Milan and Como for silks.

9. HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

It is safe to drink water in all large Italian cities, and in most tourist hotels in small and large towns. In rural areas, particularly in the south, you should drink bottled water or soda, and avoid milk and drinks made with milk.

In order to be prepared for any health problems, you can buy health cards produced by an organization called **Roue Blanche Internationelle Sanitaire Touristique**. With the card you will receive a booklet written in six languages--French, English, Italian, Spanish, German and Russian--which contains phrases you can use to contact a doctor by phone and get help if you need it. The booklet also contains a list of doctors who are associated with the organization, including their addresses and phone numbers.

The International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers Inc. (IAMAT) is another source of information. They will provide a list of approved doctors in Italy who speak English. Membership in this organization is free, and prices for doctor calls are set. In Italy, IAMAT has member institutions in 32 cities. In the United States, write to: IAMAT, 736 Center Street, Lewiston, NY 14092 or call (716) 754-4883; in Europe contact IAMAT at 17 Gotthardstrasse, 6300 Zug, Switzerland.

10. SECURITY

The art of purse-snatching has been developed in Italy by a number of young men on motorscooters

or motorcycles. One individual drives and the other snatches. So it is important to carry your purse or packages in the hand or over the shoulder farthest from the curb and to keep a firm grip on whatever you are carrying. In cafés and restaurants keep your belongings with you on your lap, preferably with the strap around your wrist. Don't set things on another table while you are eating.

In train stations and airports watch your luggage, and don't leave anything in full view in a car. Lock whatever you have in the trunk if you must leave it in a vehicle.

Don't carry all your cash, traveler's checks and passport with you; put what you are carrying in different compartments in your purse or carrying bag. If you are staying in a hotel, leave what you don't need in the hotel safe. Don't leave valuables in a hotel room when you are not there.

Another area to watch out for is receiving change for a purchase, or even at the bank when you are changing money. CHECK your change at all times, and make sure that it is correct before leaving the counter.

11. TIPPING

In Italy, service charges are included in your hotel bill and are listed separately on your restaurant checks. (See also 3. Restaurants and 4. Hotels.) In large cities and resorts, waiters will expect a 10% tip even though a service charge has been included in your restaurant check. In general, the following people should be tipped: chambermaids, bellboys, doormen if they call you a taxi, concierges, checkroom attendants, ushers in theaters, washroom attendants, and hairdressers. In addition, you should leave a small tip for standing at a café bar to have

a drink or coffee. You should ask your Italian hosts when you arrive in Italy what the appropriate amount of tip is for each of the individuals you expect to request services from during your stay.

12. CONVERSIONS

In Europe sizes and measures differ from those used in the United States. The following charts are provided to help you make the necessary conversions if you are not already acquainted with the European system.

Weights and Measures

Metric		U.S.	
1	gram (g)	0.035	ounce
454	grams	1	pound
1	kilogram ("kilo")	2.2	pounds
1	centimeter (cm)	0.3937	inch
2.54	centimeters	1	inch
1	meter (m)	3.280	feet
1609.3	meters	1	mile

Liquid Measure

1	liter (l)	2.113	pints
1	liter	1.056	quarts
3.785	liter	1	gallon

Dry Measure

1	liter	0.908	quart
1	dekaliter (10 l)	1.135	pecks
1	hectoliter (100 l)	2.837	bushels

Kitchen Equivalents

U.S.	Metric
1 cup sugar	200 gr.
1 cup flour	150 gr.
1 tsp.	5 gr.
1 tbsp.	12 gr.

Kilometers and Miles

1 km	0.6 mile
3	1.8
5	3.1
8	4.9
10	6.2
15	9.3
20	12.4
25	15.5
35	21.7
50	31.0
100	62.1
200	124.2
300	186.4
500	310.6

Thermometer Readings*

38 C	100.4 F
35	95
30	86
25	77
21	69.8
10	50
5	41
0	32
-5	23
-10	14
-15	5
-17	1.4
-25	-13
-30	-22

*European thermometers use the centigrade scale. To convert Fahrenheit to centigrade, subtract 32, then multiply by 5 and divide by 9. To convert centigrade to Fahrenheit, multiply by 9, divide by 5 and add 32. The chart above gives an approximate conversion.

(continued....)

Clothing Sizes

Skirts, Dresses, Coats:

U.S.	Europe
10	38
12	40
14	42
16	44
18	46
20	48

Blouses:

U.S.	Europe
30	38
32	40
34	42
36	44
38	46
40	48

Shirts:

U.S.	Europe
14	36
14½	37
15	38
15½	39
16	41
16½	42
17	43

Shoes:

U.S.	Europe
6	37
7	38
8	39
9	40
10	41
11	42
12	43

Notes

CUSTOMS AND VALUES

Now that you have a handle on basic facts about where to find what you need and how to get it, you will want to begin looking more closely at how people live in Italy. Since Italians are to be your new friends and family, it is important to understand about their customs and values so that you can fit into their world successfully. The topics covered in this section have been chosen to help you begin your study of Italian customs and values. Again, it will be up to you to learn the specifics about the people with whom you live and interact. The information we give you here is only a place for you to start. This is the beginning of your cultural exploration; it will be up to you to complete it. **Bella figura!**

The following topics are covered in this section:

1. Greetings
2. Titles
3. Family Interaction
4. Time
5. **Dolce Far Niente**
6. Personal Space and Privacy
7. Walking
8. Meals
9. **Bella Figura**
10. Dating
11. Male Dominance
12. Leisure
13. Family Life
14. Hospitality
15. Festivals

1. GREETINGS

Handshaking is more common in Italy than in many other Western countries. People shake hands whenever they meet people they know, even if they run into one another several times in one day. The only people whose hands you do not need to shake are very close acquaintances, and even close friends may shake hands when they meet, as well as when they leave one another. A good rule of thumb is: When in doubt, shake hands.

Hand kissing is generally only practiced by the aristocracy, but it should never be used with young women, or in public.

It is customary to say a greeting when you walk into a shop, such as **Buon giorno** or **Buona sera**. You do not need to wait for a response; the response is the same as the greeting. It is also common to say the same greeting when you leave the shop.

In general, Italians are extroverts, even when meeting someone for the first time. Don't be surprised, then, if new acquaintances ask personal questions, or criticize your clothes or your appearance. The greeting formulas "How are you?" and "How is the family?" are perceived as real questions indicating a sign of personal interest and will be answered as such. Foreign women will often receive extravagant compliments and will need to be able to handle them without seeming scornful or ungrateful. They are sincerely meant and reflect the desire to be friendly. An Italian who brings you a gift or invites you for a meal will expect to have your opinion of it on the spot.

2. TITLES

Titles of respect are common in Italy. Older titles still exist, such as: **marchese, conte, barone,** for men; or **marchesa, contessa, donna,** for women. **Commendatore** is still used as well as **don** for priests. The title **signore** (mister) or **signora/signorina** (Mrs./Miss) is added to surnames. Those with a college degree are often called **dottore** or **dottoressa.**

When writing to someone in Italy, it is usual to put **Gentilissimo Signore/Gentilissima Signora** (abbreviated to **Gent^{mo}/Gent^{ma}**). For professors, use **Chiarissimo Professore** or **Illustrissimo Professore.** For priests, use **Reverendo.** For Cardinals, use **Sua Eminenza.** And for the Pope: **Sua Santità.** Deputies and politicians use the title **Onorevole.**

3. FAMILY INTERACTION

Family in Italy includes extended family members --grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews--in addition to members of the nuclear family--father, mother, children. Conceived of in this way, the family is a community of considerable size. The members of this community stay together, help one another, quarrel with one another, share all joys and sorrows together. Child care is never a problem, as there are always older family members around to take care of younger ones.

In the typical family, there is a continuous stream of talk, sometimes with more than one person speaking at a time. The talk is lively and punctuated with gestures. Feelings and moods are vented easily and immediately. You will want to learn how to be comfortable in such a setting, and how to join into the conversation even if no one leaves a pause for you to speak.

4. TIME

Italians use the 24-hour clock for telling time in many situations, such as schedules for the theater, trains, etc. So, for example, 2 p.m. is 14:00, while 2 a.m. remains 2:00.

Punctuality is not valued in Italy. If someone says s/he will be somewhere at a particular time, s/he means "around" that time, and not at that precise time. You can assume s/he will arrive later than the given time, usually 10 to 15 minutes later. Even performances at theaters do not always begin at the scheduled hours, and late arrivals for business appointments are not out of the ordinary.

5. DOLCE FAR NIENTE

Dolce far niente (sweetness for doing nothing) is important in Italy. Italians do not have the attitude that they must always be doing something. "Wasting time" is not a concept. Quite the contrary, the art of being able to sit and enjoy life without feeling like you should be doing something is valued, and you will need to develop an ability to relax "Italian-style" if you want to get a real sense of what it is like to be Italian.

6. PERSONAL SPACE AND PRIVACY

The Italian notion of personal space is closer than in many other cultures. You will often see people of the same sex walking arm-in-arm down the street. Similarly, touching occurs in play among young adults as well as children. Italians are also affectionate, and often embrace one another and kiss each other on both cheeks when they say goodbye. This is true for men as well as women.

Italians like to gather where there are other people. So, for example, you will find people who do not know one another sitting in close proximity on a bus, rather than scattered separately throughout the vehicle.

Solitude and keeping to oneself are not valued in Italy. Rather, social ideals of fraternity and community are much more important.

7. WALKING

In order to avoid running into someone who is walking in the opposite direction, Italians move to the right. For those of you whose instinct is to move to the left, you will need to develop skills at moving to the right in order to avoid colliding with anyone. There is no particular etiquette about whether a man should walk on the gutter side of the pavement when walking with a woman.

8. MEALS

Meals in Italy are regarded as social events to be enjoyed and savored, and Italians tend to spend a longer time at meals than you might expect. The one exception to this is breakfast, which usually consists of nothing more than coffee with bread and butter. The main meal is **colazione**, the midday meal. Traditionally, all family members came home for the midday meal, as businesses and schools all close during this time. Now, however, customs are changing in larger cities, and you may find that the evening meal is larger and more social than the midday meal.

9. BELLA FIGURA

Bella figura is a common expression meaning something like "to make a good impression." Its frequent use suggests that it is important in Italy to make a good appearance at all times. This is reflected in the way Italians dress, the good jewelry they wear, and the importance of hospitality when you are invited into their homes.

10. DATING

"Singles" bars are not common in Italy, and Italian girls usually meet people they date through their families or close friends. Since Italian men know that Italian women would never speak to someone they don't know, they will never approach them in this manner. This is not necessarily the case with foreign women, and Italian men may approach women they don't know, thinking this is appropriate.

11. MALE DOMINANCE

Males are often more privileged than females in various aspects of Italian society. This is probably less true in the north than in the south, where unmarried girls may still be accompanied when going into the city. Male children may be more pampered than females and be given roles in the family different from their sisters. Male privilege is also established in aspects of Italian law; so, for example, adultery is punishable for women but not for men, and the husband has legal status as "head of the family." Despite this apparent dominance, women have much authority in the domain of the home and often have great influence within the family unit.

12. LEISURE

Both spectator and participant sports are popular in Italy, and facilities exist everywhere. Italians enjoy car racing, horse racing, bicycle racing, soccer, golf and tennis. Winter sports, hunting, fishing, and mountaineering are also popular, as are all water sports in coastal areas.

Movies, theater and opera are available in the evening, and there are cafés, discos and clubs for socializing with friends.

13. FAMILY LIFE

Women are primarily responsible for child care, although today more and more Italian women also work outside the home. Employed men and women go to work daily, Monday through Friday. Children attend school every morning from 8:20 to 12:40 or 1:20 depending upon their ages, Monday through Saturday. Although customs are changing regarding the midday meal, most families meet for this meal since a long lunch break is still common. The others meet at dinner and usually stay together to relax in the evening.

In the evening people watch TV, visit friends, go to the movies or the theater. Young people often stay together in the afternoon and evening to study. On weekends they may go to a movie.

14. HOSPITALITY

Hospitality in Italy may feel very possessive sometimes. Your Italian family and friends will want to spend time with you and accompany you on your excursions. The possessiveness you may experience is only a sign of real interest and care, and as you

become used to differences in privacy and personal space, you will probably find it supportive rather than confining.

15. FESTIVALS

In Italy, people celebrate many saints', heroes', and poets' birthdays. You will find festivals wherever you go, but there are a few special regional celebrations you might try to see if your trip coincides with the dates.

Il Palio, a medieval procession and horse race, is held in **Siena** in July and August.

The Miracle of San Gennaro, held in **Naples** on the first Saturday in May and on September 19, celebrates this saint's blood, which is believed to liquify on these dates every year.

Il Giuoco del Calcio is held in **Florence** on the first Sunday in May and on June 24. A medieval football game is played in sixteenth-century costumes in the **Piazza della Signoria**.

The Feast of the Candles, held in **Gubbio** on May 15th, is a celebration with huge candles carried first in solemn procession and then finally raced to the shrine.

The historical **Regata of the Gondolieri** in **Venice** during the month of September is a time when tapestries and banners are hung from balconies, flowers are thrown from windows, and the **Canale Grande** is crowded with antique gondolas carrying **gondolieri** dressed in old-fashioned costumes.

The Feast of the Lilies is held in **Nola** on the third Sunday in June and includes a huge parade of artificial lilies.

The Feast of Santa Rosalia, patroness of the town of **Palermo**, is held July 11 to 15, and ends with a colorful pilgrimage to the saint's shrine on **Monte Pellegrino**.

These are but a few of the annual Italian festivals. The Calendar of Italian Events put out by Tourist News from Italy lists over 300 annual events, with their dates and locations.

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COUNTRY FACTS

As you become more comfortable living in Italy, you will find that you need to know more facts about the country; for example, how it is organized and governed. This section includes information about the following aspects:

1. History
2. Map
3. Land and People
4. Government
5. Economy
6. Education
7. Religion
8. Art

1. HISTORY

The Greeks, who were the earliest historians, first used the word "Italy" to refer only to the southern part of the Italian peninsula. Originally there were no "Italians"; different groups of people lived in what is now known as Italy, each speaking its own language and having its own culture. In the south, the people were Mediterranean; in the north, they were Nordic. The most important pre-Roman inhabitants were the Etruscans, and recent excavations have shown they controlled nearly all the peninsula, from Mantua to Salerno.

The Roman Republic was founded about 510 B.C. when Romans drove the Etruscan rulers away. Rome had to fight many wars against insiders as well as outsiders. Unity was first imposed by Julius Caesar when he became dictator in 48 B.C. From then on, Italian history consists of periods of war and peace

under Roman rulers. In 476 Italy was taken over by non-Romans, and from this time until 1870, Italy had no real political unity.

One period of historical significance was the Renaissance, which covered most of the 15th century. During this time, Italy experienced an "explosion" of cultural development, with Florence as the center of activity. Artists from this period whose names you might recognize are Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarroti.

King Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy took Rome in 1870 and unified the country under an Italian ruler for the first time since the Roman Empire. King Victor, originally ruler of an area of Northern Italy, declared the formation of the Kingdom of Italy which included the whole peninsula except Venice and Rome.

In 1914, Italy entered World War I on the side of the Allies (France, Great Britain and Russia). The country was not well prepared for the war, and the human sacrifice was terrible. At the end of the conflict, Italy acquired the city of Trieste and the region of Trentino. By 1919, disorganization of the political parties and general discontent gave rise to a new movement called **Fascismo**, led by Benito Mussolini. In 1922, Mussolini led a march on Rome, and the king nominated him as premier, instructed him to form a cabinet. Although the Fascist movement was a minority in Italy, it received support from many directions, from people who hoped to benefit from stability at whatever the cost to achieve it. Mussolini systematically eliminated all opposition, and from 1927 until the end of World War II, Italy was ruled under his strict dictatorship.

Poorly prepared once again, Italy entered World War II on the side of Germany and suffered great defeats in North Africa, Ethiopia, Greece, and Russia.

The Allied armies invaded Italy and a new government was established. Mussolini tried to escape but was caught and executed by the Partisans. A new government was formed in Rome, headed by the Partisan leader Ferruccio Parri. He was later succeeded by Alcide de Gasperi.

In 1946 elections were held to determine the new form of government. The monarchy ended as people voted for becoming a republic. By the end of 1947, a new constitution had been approved, creating a president, a two-chamber parliament, and a cabinet and prime minister. The first general election held in 1948 gave the majority to the Christian Democrats (de Gasperi's party). This party has continued to control Italy's parliament ever since, in spite of the fact that Italy has Western Europe's largest Communist party.

2. MAP

On the next page, you will find a map of Italy. Locate the region where you will be living, and write in the name of the town where you will be staying if it is not already on the map. Also locate nearby towns you might want to visit, particularly if they are having festivals during the time you plan to be in Italy (see section 15 in CUSTOMS AND VALUES).

3. LAND AND PEOPLE

Italy is more like two countries, rather than one. The standard of living, the literacy of the people, the customs and even the language vary greatly from north to south. The poorest region is in the south, the richest in the north.

ITALY
0 50 100 miles
0 100 kilometers
AUSTRIA
SWITZERLAND
FRANCE
Milan
Turin
Venice
Po
YUGOSLAVIA
Florence
Arno
Ligurian Sea
Adriatic Sea
Tiber
CORSICA
Rome
Naples
SARDINIA
Tyrrhenian Sea
Ionian Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Palermo
SICILY
TUNISIA
MALTA

Language: Italian is the basic language spoken throughout the country. In the **Alto Adige** (South Tyrol) region of the north, German is spoken by many and is used on signs in addition to Italian. Each region of Italy has its own dialect. Most Italians can understand one another's dialects, but as a non-native speaker you will find that some are very difficult, if not impossible, for you to understand.

Population: Italy is crowded. It has the fifth highest population density in Europe, with approximately 200 people per square kilometer (or 490 per square mile). In 1982 the population was 57.6 million, with a zero population growth rate.

Ethnic Groups: The principal ethnic group is Italian, but there are also small minority groups. The largest groups are the German-speaking people of Bolanzo Province and the Slovenes around Trieste. Other minority groups are of Albanian, Greek, Ladino and French origin.

Geography: Italy consists of a 1,127-kilometer (700-mile) long peninsula located in the Mediterranean Sea. It includes the islands of Sardinia, Sicily, Pantelleria, and the Eolian (Lipari) group.

Cities: The capital city is Rome, with a population of 3.5 million. Other major cities are Milan, Turin, Naples, Florence, and Venice.

Land and Climate: Except for the Po Valley area in northern Italy, the "heel of the boot," and coastal regions, Italy is rugged and mountainous. The climate is mild, although there are certain variations. Sicily and the south compare in climate to that of California in the United States, although they are a bit warmer on the average. The Alps and the Dolomites in the north compare to the climate of Colorado.

4. GOVERNMENT

Italy became a democratic republic on June 2, 1946. The new constitution which came into effect on January 1, 1948 established a parliament made up of two legislative chambers, a judiciary, and an executive branch made up of the Council of Ministers led by the prime minister. A new president is elected every 7 years by both chambers of Parliament. He or she nominates a prime minister, who in turn chooses the ministers for the Council of Ministers. The council is usually made up mostly of members of Parliament since it must retain the confidence of both houses of Parliament in order to be successful at policy-making.

The Parliament's two houses are the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Most members are elected directly by popular majority. However, in addition to 315 elected members, the Senate also includes ex-presidents and certain other individuals appointed according to particular constitutional provisions. Members in both houses are elected for a maximum of 5 years, but either house may be dissolved before the end of this period and new elections called. Bills may originate in either house, but must be passed by a majority in both houses in order to be adopted.

Members of Parliament belong to different political parties, of which there are many in Italy. The two largest parties are the Christian Democratic Party and the Communist Party. Other smaller parties are: Liberal, Republican, Social Democratic, Radical, Italian Social Movement, and Socialist.

Italy is highly centralized. There are 94 provinces, each directed by a prefect appointed by, and responsible to, the central government. In addition to the provinces, there are also 20 regions with

limited governing powers: **Piedmont, Lombardy, Venetia, Liguria, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marches, Latium, Abruzzi, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicate, Calabria, Sicily, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venetia Julia, Valle d'Aosta,** and **Sardinia.** The last 5 of these regions have had operating governments for a long time. The other 15 did not vote for their regional parliaments until 1970. This establishment of regional governments is providing for more decentralization of the Italian government.

5. ECONOMY

The Italian government owns the electricity, transportation, telephone and telegraph systems, as well as national radio and television networks. Apart from these, and certain large industrial and commercial enterprises in which the state has controlling interest, Italy has basically a private-enterprise economy.

Italy has few natural resources; no coal, iron, or oil deposits are known. Natural gas, found in the Po Valley region in 1945, is the country's most valuable resource, but it is being rapidly used up . Most raw materials used in industry and 82% of the country's energy must be imported. Much of the land cannot be used for farming because it is mountainous. Agriculture employs only about 25% of Italian workers. They produce wheat, corn, rice, barley, oats, olives, tomatoes, and wine.

The economy also differs greatly from north to south. While northern Italy is one of the most advanced industrial regions in Western Europe, the peninsula south of Rome and the islands are underdeveloped, and the standard of living is much lower than in the north.

6. EDUCATION

Education in Italy is free and compulsory for children from 6 to 14 years of age. Students attend 5 years of elementary school followed by 3 years of intermediate school. If they then want to continue their education, they can attend different kinds of high school--classical, scientific, and technical. These programs last about 5 years, at the end of which students receive the **Diploma di Maturità**. They may then look for a job or enter a university or college.

The **Diploma di Maturità** guarantees a student admission into the Italian university system. There are about 30 universities and colleges which offer 4-, 5- and 6-year programs. At the end, a degree called **laurea** is awarded. Italian education, especially higher education, is based upon a view of education which is primarily theoretical rather than practical. Programs at universities and colleges emphasize theoretical skills, and the secondary schools which prepare students for these programs--classical and scientific--are considered to be the most prestigious.

7. RELIGION

The influence of the Catholic Church is felt indirectly and directly in many ways in Italy. Most children are named for saints. The Catholic religion is taught in school. The indissolubility of marriage in Italy is Church law. A part of every citizen's taxes go to pay priests' salaries. Most of Italy's holidays are religious. Over 95% of Italians are themselves Roman Catholic.

The Lateran Treaty of February 11, 1929, signed into effect by the Mussolini government and the Holy See, first established Vatican City as an independent and completely sovereign state. It covers 108 acres

west of the Tiber River and is separated from the city of Rome by a high wall. About 1,000 people live there, producing their own newspaper, issuing their own stamps, and making their own money. In Vatican City you will find print shops, a glass-making factory, an observatory, a railway station, a post office, a power plant, and barracks for the Vatican's own army. Radio Vatican broadcasts in 14 different languages to 6 different countries.

Pope John Paul II is head of the Vatican City State. He is the first non-Italian to be chosen as pope in 456 years. He is Polish, and the first Pole ever to be granted full legislative, judicial, executive, and military powers within his own state. He is authorized to live in Italy and travel within it whenever he wants. He reigns over 700 million Catholics throughout the world.

8. ART

Crafts: Craftsmanship is regional in Italy. You can find basketwork, weaving and silversmithing anywhere in Italy, but other crafts are found in particular regions. **Sicily** is known for embroidery, **Puglia** and **Romagna** for homespun tweeds. Ironwork is associated with **Puglia** and southern **Tuscany**. (See section 8 of FIRST STEPS for additional craft centers.)

Music: Opera has become synonymous with Italian music throughout the world. It began in Florence where a group of Humanists, called the Camerata, hoped to revive classic Greek and Roman drama by combining theater and music. From there it developed over the years until today we have what is called "grand opera"--modern Italian opera. Not everyone likes Italian opera; it is often stylized and melodramatic. Still, it is Italy's "lifeblood" and represents the Italian cultural spirit as nothing else can.

Cinema: Fellini is one Italian movie producer whom you may have heard of. His films have achieved international fame. The Italian ability to dramatize, plus their love for life, be it painful or happy, has helped Italian movies become recognized and enjoyed the world over. Movie theaters exist in all communities, and performances continue until late at night.

Museums and Art Galleries: There are around 70 government-owned museums and art galleries in Italy. Hours of opening vary from town to town, and season to season. Tourist bureaus provide exact information.

Italy has a rich tradition in the arts. In architecture, the Renaissance architects studied the ruins of Roman buildings and planned their buildings with similar classical lines. New combinations resulted in modern times. The tradition in painting is also rich. Italian artists played an important role in early Christian art in the Middle Ages. In the Renaissance, important changes in the use of color and three-dimensional effects emerged in Italy. In the art galleries and museums you will see famous paintings by Italians from early Christian days until the present.

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Living in France
Living in Italy
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Living in Japan
Living in The United States

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15 Elm St., Brattleboro, VT 05301 800-366-4775